DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 342 502 PS 020 378

AUTHOR Weitock, Theresa A.
TITLE The Development and Implementation of a Parent Outreach Program To Increase School Involvement of Fourth Grade Parents.
PUB DATE 91
NOTE 58p.; ED.D. Practicum, Nova University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Practicum Papers (043) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Achievement; Disadvantaged Youth; Elementary School Students; *Field Trips; *Grade 4; Intermediate Grades; Low Income; Modeling (Psychology); *Outreach Programs; *Parent Participation; Parent Student Relationship; Parent Teacher Conferences; *Parent Teacher Cooperation; *Parent Workshops; Self Esteem; Student Behavior

ABSTRACT

This practicum aimed to increase parental involvement in an elementary school through the fourth grade. Objectives were that: (1) parental attendance at PTA meetings would increase by 25 percent; (2) the number of parent chaperons per field trip would increase from zero to two; and (3) one parent would help out with classroom activities each week. Parent-teacher workshops were designed to help parents realize their valuable role in their children's education. Workshops for parents, teachers, and children taught parents and children how to work together. Modeling techniques and hands-on activities were used. Attendance data were collected for each session. Checklists, questionnaires, and surveys were used. Outcomes of the practicum were positive. Attendance at PTA meetings and workshops increased considerably. Parents attended field trips and helped in the classroom. Teachers became increasingly involved and encouraged by parents' responses. There was also an increase in parents' and students' self-esteem and in student achievement on SAT scores and other final testing scores. Results demonstrate the importance of parent-teacher cooperation and parent involvement in student achievement, behavior, and self-esteem. Appended are 14 references and related material. (Author/GLR)

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The Development and Implementation of a Parent Outreach Program to Increase School Involvement of Fourth Grade Parents

by

Theresa A. Weitock

Cluster XXXVIII

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A Practicum I Report presented to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

1991

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

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Sept 3 1991

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This practicum report was submitted by Theresa A. Weitock under the direction of the advisor listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

8-28-91

Date of Final Approval of Report

Georgiana Lowen

Dr. Georgiana Lowen, Advisor

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank her practicum advisor, Dr.Georgianna Lowen, for her guidance, patience, and direction. She would also like to express her gratitude to her principal, Ms. June T. Day for allowing new parent involvement workshops to be conducted during and after school, in the evenings, and on Saturdays. She would also like to express her thanks to Mrs. Victoria Williams for her active support of all activities involving parents and students. A final and special thanks to the author's family for their support, understanding, and encouragement throughout this practicum.

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ABSTRACT

Development and Implementation of a Parent Outreach Program to Increase Parental Involvement of Fourth Grade Parents in an Elementary School. Weitock, Theresa, 1991; Practicum I Report, Nova University, Ed.D., Program in Child and Youth Studies, Descriptors; Involvement/Parents' Workshops/ Teachers (and Parents)/ Cooperative/Teachers and Parents Communications/Teachers and Parents/ Self Esteem/Students.

This practicum aimed to increase parental involvement in the elementary school. It also attempted to provide workshops for the parents to help them realize the valuable role they play in their children's' education.

Six Parent-Teacher-Child workshops were designed to teach parents and children how to work together: Modeling technique as well as "hands on" activities were all part of the Parent Outreach Program. Sign in sheets for parents, teachers and children were provided and data was collected after each session. Checklists, Questionnaires and Surveys developed by this author were used. Feedback information was also collected.

Outcomes of this practicum were very encouraging; all of the objectives were achieved. Attendance at all PTA meetings and workshops increased considerably. Parents attended field trips and stopped by to help in the classroom. Teachers became increasingly involved and encouraged by parent's response. An extraordinary side effect of this practicum was an increase of self esteem on the part of the parents and students. Another positive side effect of this practicum was an increase of student achievement on the SAT scores and other final testing scores. The data from this practicum strongly demonstrates that a) when parents and teachers work together, positive results emerge. b) with an increase of parental involvement there can be a difference in achievement of the students and c) when parents make themselves visible in school the students' behavior improves as well as the students' self esteem.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of the Community

The work setting was an intermediate public school located in an inner city school district, in the Southeastern part of the United States. The neighborhood is depicted by poverty and despair. The area is considered a high crime area due to the number of incidents of drug related crimes. The socio-economic status of these families ranges from the low to lower middle class income level. Many of the families are on welfare and unemployed.

The school itself is part of a feeder pattern of schools where third graders are sent upon completion of their primary school. The school is considered an intermediate school because it houses 4th, 5th, and 6th grades in the main building, while Kindergarten and Pre-Kindergarten are located in a separate building adjacent to the P.E. field. When the students graduate from the intermediate school, they are sent to the junior high, and then to the senior high in the same feeder pattern.

The main building is two stories and is designed in a pod fashion. There are three pods located on the first floor, centered around the school's cafetorium. There are four pods located on the second floor, and they are centered around the school's media center. Each pod contains 5 to 6 classrooms with 20 to 25 students in each class.

The school has been considered multicultural as well as multi-ethnical because of the diverse groups of people it attempts to serve. It contains various Hispanic groups as well as North American Blacks, Haitians and Jamaican students. The faculty and administrative staff is equally diverse as well.

The school has an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) class, and soon to come, a Limited English Proficiency (LEP) class. New legislature has mandated that all teachers have special training in Multi Ethnic Training Applications (META). The school is in the process of training its teachers. Training in META should be completed by August 1, 1992.

In addition to these classes, the school has four special education classes as well as two gifted classes. There are also two Bilingual Content Curriculum (BCC) classes; one is in Spanish for Spanish speaking students, and one is in Creole for the Haitian students.

The student body consists of 813 students with the following composition; 68% Hispanic, 20% N. American Black, 9% Haitians, and 3% Jamaicans. Its teaching staff of 50 is fully integrated also.

However, integration does not come easy for all groups. What was once a predominately Black neighborhood, now has various Hispanic groups from South to Central America. Not only has integration created a higher unemployment rate for its inhabitants, but with the advent of increased unemployment came an increase of crime. Each cultural group blames the other for their misfortune. The situation has resulted in an increase of tension between the different cultural groups and ultimately erupts in violence periodically, thus posing a real threat to the residents of the community by making it an unsafe place to live, work, and play.

Author's Work Setting and Role

The pod in which the author is located, houses six classrooms. Five are 4th grade Chapter I students and one is a regular 4th grade classroom. The pod has been territorially sectioned off by each classroom teacher in an effort to keep out unnecessary noise and distractions. Often, children from other classes pass through the room to

use the bathroom facilities which are located at the end of the pod.

The author, a 4th grade Chapter I teacher, shares a section with another 4th grade Chapter I teacher. This year they were team teaching. The author was responsible for teaching all the facets of the Language Arts Curriculum to both classes (approximately 42 students), using the Whole Language Approach. In addition, the author was also responsible for teaching Science and Health. In turn, the team teacher instructed the group in Mathematics and Social Studies.

Other responsibilities held by the Author are; President of the Faculty Council, (the school is not on School Based Management) which acts as a liaison between faculty members and administration; Grade Level Chairperson; and an active member of the Social Committee. All of these responsibilities include holding meetings, transmitting information between Faculty and Administration and Faculty to Faculty. All committees work toward the aim of increasing communication among the staff and helping the school run more smoothly.

Other duties of the Grade Level Chairperson are to order textbooks and materials and distribute them among the teachers and the students of Grade 4.

Other duties required of the Author as a member of the Faculty Council were to devise a new school improvement plan and write a proposal for a grant to implement the plan. The author has also received extensive training in Writing Across the Curriculum as well as the Usage of the Whole Language Approach in the classroom. She has given several workshops to the teachers and staff and is available for consultation and collaboration. She maintains an open line of communication between herself and all members of the staff, including the administration.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

The situation that needed improvement was the amount of Parental involvement in the school.

Parents were difficult to reach for conferences when called to school. Very often phones were not present in the homes of the children and if they were, many of them were disconnected.

Conferences very often had to be rescheduled because of the lack of attendance on the part of the parent or guardian of the child.

There was low attendance at PTA meetings and other programs put on by the school personnel.

There was also a lack of motivation and interest on the part of the students and their parents.

There was evidence of little or no supervision of the students after they left school. Materials such as books, paper, and pencils were not present in the home either.

Teachers had difficulty reaching the homes of the students. When they finally made contact with the parents,

the teacher often became the bearer of bad news. Therefore, frustration between parents and teachers mounted. It was evident that there was a need for a different approach to the problem.

Problem Documentation

Data to support the existence of lack of parental involvement was gathered from interviews with students and teachers, observations of low attendance at school functions, and student and teacher questionnaire surveys (Appendices A, B, &C).

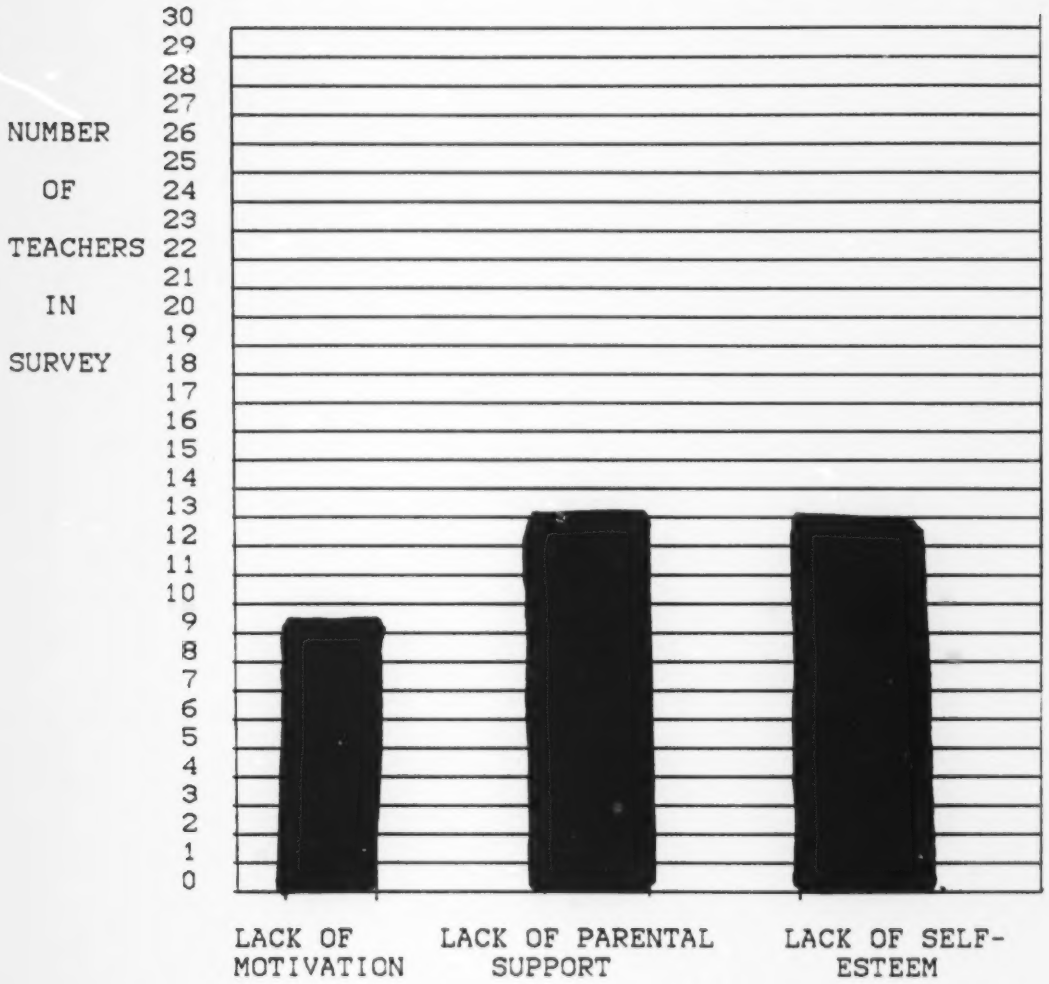
Table 1 shows the results of a recent survey.

Table 1

Results of Survey Taken From 30 Elementary School Teachers on Related Causes for Low Achievement of Students

Causes Related to Parents	Causes Related to Child	Other Related Causes
17	8	5

FIGURE 1



THREE MAJOR CAUSES FOR LOW ACHIEVEMENT IN READING

Table 2

Results From the Survey Taken From the 12 Fourth Grade Teachers at the Author's Work Setting

In Response to Questions 1 and 2; Teachers Who Felt a Need for a Parent Outreach Program	12
In Response to Questions 3 and 4; Teachers Who Felt Working Closely With Parents and Children Enhanced the Child's Education	12
In Response to Questions 5 and 6; Teachers Who Felt Parents Would Be Interested In Attending Meetings	11
In Response to Questions 7 and 8; Teachers Who Felt Parents and Children Would Be Interested In Coming To Workshops	12
In Response to Question 9; The Types of Workshops Suggested Numbered Were	7
In Response to Question 10; Teachers Who Said They Would Attend Workshops	11

Table 3

The Results From the Logs Showing the Number Of Parents Attending Parent Outreach Meetings In the Past

	Parents	Teachers	Students	Administrators
5/23/90	19	12	38	1
9/22/90	6	4	12	1

Causative Analysis

Possible causes of the problem are that parents work at night and cannot attend evening functions. Parents who work during the day are often too exhausted to come to evening functions.

Parents who might find a way to attend are often put off by feelings of inferiority. Parents are low in self-esteem and are often intimidated by the school setting.

Many of the parents do not see the value of a good education, and therefore transmit their attitudes to students. A large number of parents and students are not motivated.

Relationship of the Problem to Literature

Literature review reveals the need for good communication between parents and teachers. Teachers need to educate inner city parents and show them ways they can be valuable to their children's education (Fredricks, 1989).

Parents often don't know what to do, so consequently they do nothing. Fredricks (1989) feels that parents need to be taught or shown ways that they can be helpful. An occurring pattern for causative analysis reveals the need for good communication between the home and the school.

Close contact with all parents of classroom children and an active participation in a Parent Out Reach Program, should encourage and recruit not only parents, but entire families to become part of a larger family, the school (Fredricks, 1989).

Teachers are well aware that the traditional American family in which Dad went to work while Mom stayed home to care for two school age children is in danger of becoming extinct. Economic conditions, a rise in the number of working mothers and 50% divorce rate have all been contributing factors (Mernit, 1990).

Parents play a crucial role in their children's public education. Parents should realize that they have a primary responsibility for the educational development of their children. Parents must be involved in the education of

their children from birth until graduation (Uhlfelder, 1990).

Everyone benefits when the community knows its teachers and its school programs. Teachers should promote their school to the parents and the community in order to be effective (Novelli, 1990).

Disadvantaged children are capable of much more than parents typically require of them. If they are to fulfill their potential, parents and teacher must adopt practices that reflect this higher expectation (Knapp, Turnbull, and Shields, 1990).

Teachers and parents need to read more to their children at home and at school. Active involvement can increase the student's comprehension (Hillerich, 1990).

Fredricks (1989) maintains that teachers need to promote reaching out to parents all year long. Reaching out needs to be an on going effort from September to June in order to insure a successful program. Reaching out to parents is worth the effort. They are a vital part of any school program (Fredricks, 1989).

According to Bowman (1989), he feels teachers need to be "Culture" sensitive when working with different cultural groups. He feels that it is important for the child's self-esteem, and self-worth.

Language minority students are an increasing challenge in the inner city schools. In order to make them feel at home, you have to also make an effort to reach out to their parents, and make them feel at home first (Bowman, 1989).

One pattern that continually emerges from the literature review is that parents need to become more involved with their children's education.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The author's general goal is to have parental involvement increase throughout the fourth grade.

Behavioral Objectives

1. The attendance at PTA meetings would increase by 25% for all fourth grade parents. This would be evident by direct observation. Records would be kept, if parents attended and the number would be counted and changed into a percentile.
2. Field trips would increase from zero chaperones to two chaperones per each field trip. Records would be kept, if parents came and the number would be counted and recorded. Observations and checklists would sometimes be used (Appendix D).
3. One parent each week would help out with classroom activities. This could be done at home or in school. The key factor is involving parents with school activities or projects. Observations would sometimes be used as well as a sign in sheet. All numbers would be counted and recorded (Appendix E).

Measurement of Objectives

1. The measurement used to record attendance of fourth grade parents at PTA meetings and other functions was to be an attendance sign in sheet.

2. The measurement used to record the presence of fourth grade parents acting as chaperones on field trips wasto be a students' field trip form and checklist.

3. The measurement used to record help given by fourth grade parents inside of the classroom and out was to be a volunteer parents' sign in sheet.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Possible Solutions

The problem was that the parents were not involved with the school or any of its programs.

Studies have shown that those children who have parents actively involved with their school, perform better academically and behave better than those children whose parents are more passive.

In a recent survey in England, a collaboration between teachers and parents was organized so that every child in two randomly chosen primary classes (top infant as they are called in England), at two schools (one class at each school) randomly allocated from six multiracial inner-city schools was regularly heard reading at home, from books sent by the classroom teacher. The intervention was continued for two years.

The project involved not only the organization and monitoring of the intervention and testing of attainment but also the collection of qualitative, descriptive information on what was happening in the homes and schools relevant to each child's progress.

Certain conclusions were reached as a result of the project.

1. In inner-city multiracial schools it is both feasible and practical to involve nearly all parents in formal educational activities, whether they are proficient in English or not.
2. Children who receive parental help are significantly better in reading attainment than comparable children who do not.
3. Most parents express great satisfaction in being involved in this way by the schools and say that the children are better behaved.
4. The teachers involved in the home collaboration also reported that they found the work with parents worthwhile and they continue to involve parents with subsequent classes after the experiment was concluded.
5. Small-group instruction in reading given by a highly competent specialist teacher, did not produce improvements in attainment comparable in magnitude with those obtained from the collaboration with parents (Tizard, 1981).

Different parents have different needs for their children. There is a need for Parent Program Communication. Both formal and informal communications should be established. Newsletters, regular meetings, and Teacher-Parent Conferences can provide for formal

communication. Informal communication is dependent on the program attitude toward sharing information with parents (Wardle, 1982).

There should be In Service Training which is continual for the staff. The program must honestly tell the parents what it offers, what it provides and what it does not provide. It is recommended that the teacher listen to parents as to what their expectations are and make appropriate changes when necessary. Parents should be incorporated in some important decision-making activities.

The program should reflect the needs of the children. Administrators and Directors of programs have a responsibility to know all the current information about how children develop and learn. Then they must pass this information on to their staff and parents (Wardle, 1982).

Attribution interviews were conducted with 30 mothers who had recently disagreed with their child's teacher regarding the cause of a school related problem with 30 teachers who had similar disagreements with a parent. Parents tended to hold teachers primarily responsible for these problems and to a lesser extent, characteristics of the children not under personal control. By contrast, teachers assigned most responsibility to parent home factors, next most to controllable child characteristics, and none to themselves. Teachers accurately predicted

parents attributions but parents were not aware how much they were held accountable by the teachers (Vernberg and Medway, 1981).

Even at the day care level, Parent-Staff interaction is necessary. The National Day Care Study (Dombro, 1981) recently reported that effective mechanisms for communication between parents and care givers have been developed only in "isolated instances". Parent-Staff interaction is a complex interaction between adults. It has its own set of skills and awareness that parents and care givers together must identify and develop.

However, knowing how Parent-Staff interaction can support a child's growth and development is a strong base from which parents and care givers can begin developing their teamwork.

Sharing a child's growing difficulties as well as the pleasures in today's society of isolated, nuclear families is a way parents and staff support each other and, thus, a child's growth and development. Teamwork is what is needed here (Dombro, 1981).

Teachers need to support step families by working with school counselors, children and parents to help make the school a positive healthy place in which children can learn.

First; educators must understand that they are talking about a growing number of families.

Second; a step family can grow into a lively, complex, caring community of people who love and need one another. Teachers need to follow certain rules...

1. In the classroom, work to normalize the idea of a step family.
2. In all communications from school recognize the diversity of students' family situations.
3. Train school personnel to become aware of the dynamics of forming a new family.

Above all, parents must be kept informed. Sometimes the way a child is acting in school serves as a sensitive barometer.

4. Use the school counselor or social worker as support resources for parents going through family transition.
5. Provide small-group experiences, supervised by the school counselor or social worker, in which children have the opportunity to share family concerns with others in similar situations (Barney, 1990).

Extra curricular activities at school are especially important for children who have little access to them elsewhere. The reason after school programs are successful

is due to the collaboration of teachers at all grade levels. This lends a continuity to the instruction. Assessment of the academic and psychosocial progress of students is also continuous (Gonzalez, 1990). When students feel they are valued members of the school and family, the school becomes more effective at fostering all aspects of their development-intellectual, social and moral (Schapp and Solomon, 1990).

A feeling of belonging and contributing motivates children to abide by and uphold the norms and values that the community has decided on as being important.

Each child development program version of cooperative learning emphasizes

1. Extensive interaction among group members.
2. Collaboration toward group goals.
3. Division of labor among group members.
4. Multicultural helping.
5. Use of reason and explanation.
6. Explicit consideration and discussion of values relevant to the group activity.

All too often meeting children's needs for belonging and contributing is the missing variable in the school improvement equation (Schapp and Solomon, 1990).

The literature also makes it clear that the needs of the students are the particular goal. Students appear to perform better academically and behave better in school when their parents are actively involved with their education.

Description and Justification For Solution Selected

Phone calls and introductions were made to parents. Invitations to Parent Teacher Workshops were advertised and parents were curious as to what to expect. Refreshments and prizes were offered as a campaign gimmick.

Parent Teacher Workshops were given on Homework Tips, Testing Tips and Parenting Tips. Letters to the soldiers in the Persian Gulf were written as a cooperative group effort. Science Projects made by the children were set up for the parents and students to see. Each meeting was well planned by the teachers and the Parent Outreach Committee in an effort to reach out and communicate to the Parents and Families of the Children. Each session began with an informal meeting (whole group), welcoming everyone, and

thanking them for coming. A brief explanation of the agenda was discussed, and parents, teachers, and children broke into small groups. Hands on activities were provided for all, and no one went home empty handed. Informal discussions were conducted by the leader of the group after the activity was concluded. (The leader was usually the teacher or Outreach Person). Then refreshments were served to everyone after each session. Parents, teachers, and students began to look forward to each new session. Parents became increasingly involved. Attendance was increased by parents, students, and even teachers.

Communication was on the rise. Hands on activities were tried and enjoyed by all! Parents began dropping in once a week to help out or see if there was anything they could do to help out with the activities.

When teachers scheduled field trips to the airport and other places, at least one parent made themselves available to chaperone. All chaperones' lunches, transportation, and admission were paid for. Parents and teachers gave positive feedback on the questionnaire.

Report of Action Taken

The first step of the solution strategy for this practicum began March First. The principal was consulted and the plans were made with the Parent Outreach Program People to set up the first workshop. Homework tips including children in everyday household chores such as cooking would be used. It was decided that a "hands on" activity involving following a recipe to make play dough would not only enhance the child's math concepts, but it would also increase parent-child communications. Supplies, materials, and refreshments would be provided with the help of all personnel.

A second meeting to establish an agenda for the first workshop included all teachers who were interested in participating. Each teacher was assigned a grade level and was responsible for her own presentation on homework and the "hands on" activity for her particular grade. Invitations were made up and sent to the homes of the children.

The workshop began with a general meeting welcoming the parents, teachers, and children in the cafeteria. The agenda was explained to the parents. The teachers who were responsible for each grade level were introduced.

The parents and children broke into small groups and went to the grade level teacher of their choice. Each teacher gave her own presentation on "Homework Tips" and encouraged good parent-child communication.

The homework tip focused on following a recipe to make play dough. The recipe was written on the board and the parents and children copied it down.

A table was set up in the front of the classroom with all of the ingredients laid out and labeled for the parents and children to follow. The ingredients were placed in sequential steps.

For example, Step 1 provided a measuring cup, a sack of flour, and a zip lock bag. The instructions read, "Step 1, one cup of flour." Each step provided the ingredients, a measuring device, and instructions. The parents and children formed a line, stopped at each step, and followed the directions.

The author and teachers facilitated each group as they went through the steps and followed the recipe. The last step involved food coloring which enabled the parents and the children to choose the color of their choice.

When they had completed the mixing process, the parents and the children found their own little corner and made different shapes from their newly made dough.

Suggestions for refrigerator magnets displaying "happy

faces" and different sayings such as "quality time" were made by the author and other teachers.

The children were delighted when they realized that they were able to take their dough home. They had written down the recipe, so they would be able to reproduce this experience at home.

Parents, students, and teachers all worked together for the first time. After the activity was over, a large group discussion followed.

Parents openly remarked how they felt about the experience. Everyone had the same sentiments. It was an enjoyable evening.

Refreshments consisting of punch and cookies were served while informal conversation took place. Suggestions for future workshops were discussed and parents expressed their needs and the needs of their children.

The new communication gave birth to the discussion and planning of field trips. It was suggested that the students should visit the Model City Library. All agreed that they would. Everyone went home with lifted spirits!

Although there were only 20 parents and 5 teachers present, everyone expressed the fact that they felt it was a valuable activity and one that would be done at home. It proved to be a very valuable evening and marked the

beginning of communicating and reaching out to parents and their children.

Arrangements for a field trip to the library were made by the author. For the first time since the author has been teaching at this work setting, she had a parent come along as a chaperone.

Bag lunches for everyone were ordered ahead through the school's cafeteria. The chaperone's lunch was also included.

The day of the field trip involved walking through the neighborhood and pointing out buildings of interest such as the community's recreation center, churches, and medical buildings.

Upon arrival at the library, the children were ushered into a large room. They were greeted by the head librarian who showed them a film of the Little Rascals. Afterward, she read them a story.

She promised them a puppet show on their next visit, and gave them their library cards so they could check out two books each. (Arrangements for library cards were made by the author, who picked up forms from the library for each child to bring home to their parents to fill out prior to their visit). When all the forms were returned to the author, she dropped them off at the library so that the

cards would be made available to the children on that particular day. (The children felt extremely important).

Before leaving the library, the author made arrangements with the librarian for a return visit.

After the children checked out the books they wanted, the class proceeded to the park for a leisurely lunch. Some children sat on the benches and read their books; others rode the swings; and others played ball under the trees.

The author and the chaperone kept a close eye on the children. An hour later, the class returned to school. The day was completely successful. A new insight into the culture of the children and their families was realized by the author through informal conversation with the chaperone and the children. The parent chaperone became a regular helper in the classroom as a result of this field trip.

Word about the school's first workshop and field trip got around, and other parents became encouraged by what the Parent Outreach Program was attempting to do. Each succeeding workshop had a larger percentage of parents, students, and teachers.

After another well planned meeting with the parent Outreach People, the second workshop was underway. It had the same format as the first one. It began with a large group meeting, welcoming everyone and thanking them for

coming. The agenda for the evening was explained and once again, the parents and children broke into small groups.

The focus for this workshop was "Test Taking Tips". Handouts with sample questions and common errors were prepared by the teachers ahead of time. These were distributed to the parents. Suggestions and activities to do at home with the children in order to prepare them for the SAT Test were spelled out and discussed. The parents felt confident that their children would do better in testing situations because of this workshop. A request for a follow up workshop on "Test Taking Tips" was agreed upon.

Refreshments were served and a field trip to the airport was planned. Parents volunteered to chaperone. The actual day of the field trip, however, yielded only one parent. This was still an improvement from the previous years.

Arrangements were made by the author for a County School Bus to transport the children and chaperone to the airport. Upon arrival at the airport, a special tour was arranged for the school bus to drive on a road adjacent to the air strip. (The bus was escorted by an assigned airport vehicle).

The airport vehicle directed the school bus to the Airport Fire Station located on the far end of the air strip. When the tour of the Fire Station was completed, the

airport vehicle escorted the school bus back to the terminal. There, an airport guide gave the children a tour of the International Gates, and the Aircraft parked beside them. To end the visit on a high note, a luncheon was arranged at the Burger King located inside of the terminal. All tours and lunch arrangements were made ahead of time by the author to insure everyone of a memorable visit.

When the children returned to school, they were asked to write about their experiences and to tell which part of the trip they liked best. Many of them shared their stories with the class. All expressed their enjoyment with the whole field trip, including the parent who was chaperoning.

Field trips and workshops appeared to be a major channel for communicating with the parents and children.

The last workshop focused on "Writing for Peace". Because of the successful turnout of the previous workshops, the author decided to keep the format the same. The group this time was so large, that after the initial greeting, instead of breaking up into groups, they sat in sections located in the cafeteria according to the teacher of their choice. Some parents were more comfortable with Spanish speaking teachers, while others were more comfortable with English speaking ones. Portable chalkboards were set up all over the cafeteria and each teacher stationed herself by a chalkboard and identified herself and grade level.

Once the parents and children settled themselves in the group they were most comfortable with, the teacher began a pre-writing activity. The words "Desert Storm" were written on the board, and a circle was drawn around them. Vocabulary was generated from the parents and children and ideas were formulated. All thoughts and words were written on the board. (Each group generated their own vocabulary). Letters were written in Spanish and in English by the parents and their children. The teacher facilitated by giving suggestions for the format of letter writing.

When the letter writing activity was over, many of the parents and children shared their letters. CBS News televised a small segment of this workshop. It was viewed that evening on the 10 o'clock news. It was an exciting evening for all who came.

Other field trips included additional trips to the library. This was a popular trip, not only because it was cost free (classes walked to the library and back), but because it gave the parents, teachers and students a chance to really "get to know one another" in an informal setting. A greater appreciation and understanding developed among all participants, and the self-esteem of the parents and children increased.

The most extraordinary development of this practicum was the level of comfort shared by parents and teachers

alike. Because of the increased communications between parents and teachers, parents began to make themselves more visible around the school and the classroom. Parents were easier to approach for conferences and classroom assistance. (Assistance in the classroom consisted of working with small groups of children, monitoring their independent activities at the centers, or helping with paperwork). Some parents would send in things from home to help out with projects in the classroom. Parents were also more responsive to telephone calls, more cooperative in school an out, and much more involved with their child's education.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND DISSEMINATION

Results

The problem that existed in this author's work setting was that parents were not involved with the school. They didn't respond to calls or letters. They did not appear at PTA meetings or any of the other school programs. Conferences with school counselors and parents often had to be rescheduled because of lack of attendance on the part of the parents or guardians.

The problem existed because parents did not feel comfortable in the school setting.

The goals of this practicum were to help the parents feel more comfortable in the school setting, so that they would bcome more involved with the school, its programs and its functions.

The solution to the problem was to provide workshops for the parents and help them become more familiar and comfortable in the school setting, and to bridge the gap between teachers, parents, and the school.

Objective 1 - It was projected that during the three months of the practicum, the number of parents attending PTA Meetings would increase by 25%. This was a tremendous success. Table 4 gives the results of the objective when comparing PTA attendance from the previous year.

Table 4

Comparison of Parents Attending PTA Metings for the Past Two Years

	Attendance	Population	Percentage
1989/1990	10	240	.04%
1990/1991	200	240	83%

*May was the final month in the three month Practicum.

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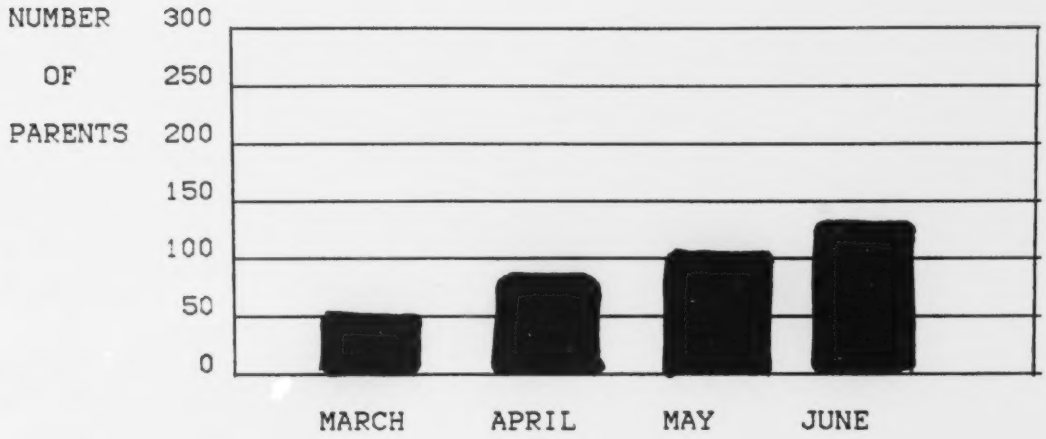
*See Figure 2, next page.

FIGURE 2



GRAPH OF ATTENDANCE OF 4TH GRADE PARENTS AT PTA MEETINGS

Objective 2 - It was also projected that during the three months of the Practicum, the number of parents chaperoning would increase from zero to two parents a field trip. Table 5 gives the results of the objective when comparing last year's field trips to those of this year.

Table 5

Comparison of the Number of Parents Chaperoning Field Trips During the Three Month Practicum When Compared to Chaperones Attending Field Trips Last Year

	# Chaperones	# of Field Trips	# of Chaperones per Field Trip
1989/90	0	6	0
1990/91	6	6	1

*Three month period from March to end of May.

Objective 3 - Another projection made by this practicum was that at least one parent a week will help with class work or homework. Table 6 shows the results.

Table 6

The Results of Parents Helping in the Classroom in Some Form

	# of Parents	# of Students	# of Parents Per Wk
1989/1990	40	20	0
1990/1991	40	20	1

*During the three month period from March to the end of May.

Discussion

To determine the effeciveness of this practicum qualitative as well as quantitative evidence was examined.

Acording to Table 4, there were 200 parents who showed at the last meeting. Out of the 200 parents, 100 were 4th grade parents while the other 100 were 5th and 6th grade parents combined.

The practicum was a great success and after the 3 month period, more and more parents came to meetings, programs and other school affairs.

This practium proved to have a positive effect on all involved, showing an increase of 79%.

Table 5 revealed that although objective 2 was not reached, progress in this area was certainly made. While last year showed that no chaperones attended field trips, this year showed a definite improvement. One parent for each field trip came as a chaperone. More PR is needed in this area to solicit parents to participate in field trips with their children. Perhaps by next year, the number of parents attending will have increased. One reason for this low number was because many of the parents work during the day and cannot attend field trips even if they wanted to.

Table 6 showed that parents were interested in helping in the classroom. Although they were shy at first, at least one parent a week came in to help with classroom activities, problems etc. Just the fact that they made themselves available was an increase in numbers from those in previous years. In the past, parents did not come to help. But during the three month practicum at least one parent each week came to help. More and more parents were begining to feel comfortable in the school setting. Many parents couldn't avail themselves because of work or other obligations and responsibilities.

Based on the results of the practicum, the writer concludes that the workshops conducted at each PTA meeting brought a cohesiveness to the faculty, students, and

parents. This unity caused the parents to feel more at ease in the school and more confident to offer help with field trips and other classroom activities.

Open lines of communications through telephoning, notes and home visits proved to be very beneficial when trying to bridge the gap with parents and students.

The author feels that this practicum was successful in increasing parental involvement for fourth grade parents in an elementary school. Additional benefits achieved by this practicum were an improvement of behavior on the part of the students whose parents participated, and an increase of self-esteem for all involved.

Recommendations

It is recommended that open lines of communication be established with parents from the beginning of the year.

Goals and objections should be spelled out to parents at the first open house meeting and volunteers for field trips-room mothers and helpers should be solicited from the very start of the school year. In addition, an on going line of communication should be kept up all year between teachers, parents and children.

Dissemination

This practicum has been shared with, and made available to the school faculty.

The writer will also submit copies to special teachers and counselors and encourage them to join in reaching out to all the parents in all areas of the curriculum.

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APPENDIX A

TEACHER SURVEY

Dear Teachers,

I am taking a survey to determine the nature of the problems and causes that prevent our students from achieving higher scores on reading comprehension and language arts tests.

Please assist me by giving your input as to the specific problems and causes affecting our students. Your cooperation and help is greatly appreciated in this matter.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Weitock

Mrs. Weitock

PROBLEMS	CAUSES
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
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APPENDIX B

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Fourth Grade Teachers,

I am conducting this interview among all the fourth grade teachers, to find out how effective you think the Parent Outreach Program was in this school. Please answer the questions as honestly as possible. Your cooperation in this matter will be greatly appreciated.

1. Did you feel that there was a need for a Parent Outreach Program in this school?

Yes_____ No_____

2. Why did you feel this way? Please explain.

_____

_____

3. Did you feel that working closely with parents and children enhanced the child's education?

Yes_____ No_____

4. Please tell why, or why not.

_____

_____

5. Do you think parents and children would be interested in coming to future Parent Outreach Meetings including Workshops?

Yes_____ No_____

6. Please give your reasons telling why or why not.

_____

_____

7. Would you as a teacher be interested in participating in future Parent Outreach Meetings including Workshops?

Yes_____ No_____

8. Give reasons why or why not.

_____

9. Would you be interested in participating in Saturday or after school workshops?

Yes_____ No_____

10.Do you have any suggestions for future workshops or activities to enhance this program?

Yes_____ No_____

11.Please explain.

_____

_____

Thank you for your feedback.

Sincerely,

Theresa A. Weitock

Theresa A. Weitock

APPENDIX C

PTA ATTENDANCE ROSTER

PARENT EDUCATION PROGRAM

PARTICIPANT ROSTER

DCPS

DA

PR

ACTIVITY: PARENT/CHILD WORKSHOP

SCHOOL: KELSEY PHARR ELEMENTARY

FACILITATOR: _____

	PARENT'S NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE #	CHILD'S NAME & GRADE		
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						
7.						
8.						
9.						
10.						
11.						
12.						
13.						
14.						
15.						
16.						

Administrator's Signature _____

Facilitator's Signature __

APPENDIX D

FIELD TRIP FORM

JUNE T. DAY
PRINCIPAL

Octavio J. Visiedo
SUPERINTENDENT
DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

PRELIMINARY PLANS FOR FIELD TRIP

DESTINATION_____

DATE_____ DEPARTURE_____ RETURN_____

TEACHERS PARTICIPATING_____
(List all teachers who plan to go on trip)

NO. OF STUDENTS_____ NO. OF CHAPERONES_____

MODE OF TRANSPORTATION_____
(SCHOOL BUS - PRIVATE BUS)

COST TO STUDENTS_____ _____
(ADMISSION FEE) (BUS)

NO. OF BUSSES NEEDED_____

Brief description of educational purpose or how trip relates to instructional objectives:

_____

_____

_____

SUBMITTED BY:_____ DATE_____

APPROVED:_____ DATE_____

PROCEDURES

1. Complete form and submit to principal at least 3 weeks to making any reservations.
2. Following approval, see Ms. Ellis for any assistance needed with bus arrangements.
3. Contact cafeteria manager regarding required lunches and prepare list of students for her. (If you are not taking lunches and not planning to return for lunch notify her of this also).
4. Begin collection of money completing the required RECAP OF COLLECTIONS form. All money should be collected prior to the day of the trip.
5. Require all students to return a permission form prior to the date of the trip.
6. On the day of trip, turn in to the office a list of all students participating in the trip. Students remaining in school should be placed with another teacher and this information noted on the above stated list.

APPENDIX E

CLASSROOM HELPER SIGN IN SHEET

53

PARENT SIGN IN SHEET

Parents for the week of:

March 4, 1991- 1._____

2._____

March 11, 1991- 1._____

2._____

March 12, 1991- 1._____

2._____

March 18, 1991- 1._____

2._____

March 25, 1991- 1._____

2._____

April 1, 1991 - 1._____

2._____

April 15, 1991- 1._____

2._____

April 22, 1991- 1._____

2._____

April 29, 1991- 1._____

2._____

May 6, 1991 - 1._____

2._____

May 13, 1991 - 1. _____

2. _____

May 20, 1991 - 1. _____

2. _____

May 27, 1991 - 1. _____

2. _____

June 3, 1991 - 1. _____

2. _____

June 10, 1991 - 1. _____

2. _____